

VISUALISING FESTIVALS: Black-figure Depictions of the Delia*

Miriam Bissett (University of Auckland)

In the course of the sixth century, around 540,¹ there seems to be a shift in the depictions of Apollo in black-figure vase-painting from the archer to the musician. This paper aims to present an overview of the evidence for seeing the growth in numbers of some scenes of Apollo playing his kithara as a reflection of the increasing popularity of the choral festival held on the island of Delos. Of the instances in the Beazley Archive Database (BAD) from the very early part of the sixth century, four out of five show Apollo with a bow.² However, in the latter part of the second half of the sixth century, and definitely, therefore, after 540, of the much larger number of black-figure scenes including Apollo (840 from the BAD), only 162 instances (19.3%) present Apollo in an aggressive stance (usually holding his bow or wearing a quiver). Furthermore, of these 162 instances, 151 (93%) are depictions of the fight over the Delphic Tripod between Herakles and Apollo, where the god is frequently wearing a quiver or holding a sword. The struggle over the Tripod is a situation where Apollo's fighting skill is needed, and so the context makes the choice of attribute obvious.³

However, the vast majority of the depictions of the god Apollo after c.540 show him playing the kithara.⁴ Many of these scenes are celebrations of some kind, such as weddings, the birth of Athena, or Herakles' apotheosis and so the context calls for music, just as the battle over the Delphic tripod requires Apollo's warrior skills.⁵ However, approximately 37% shows Apollo with his kithara in a seemingly non-narrative scene. Most of these are renditions of the god playing his kithara and framed

* For the purposes of this paper, the vase-paintings examined have been restricted to black-figure, mostly from the Beazley Archive Database (BAD) and the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (LIMC). In most instances a reference to an available picture is provided, but this was not always possible. When citing the BAD reference, the vase number is followed by * if there is an photograph available on the BAD. All dates are BC unless stated otherwise.

¹ Shapiro (1989) 56-57 discusses the increasing popularity after c.540 of the Delian Triad as a vase-painting subject.

² There are five examples of scenes including Apollo in the BAD in the time frame specified as 600-550. This includes the depiction of Apollo (unarmed) with Troilos on the François Vase: Florence 4209; *ABV* 46.1, 682; BAD 300000*; *LIMC* Apollon 876*. The remaining four examples all depict Apollo with his bow in an aggressive context: a fragment from c.570-560, Thebes 2120 (BAD 7830; *LIMC* Apollon 625*); another similar fragment from slightly later, Athens Akr. 2406 (BAD 7931; *LIMC* Apollon 1067*); and the final two examples attributed to the Castellani Painter: Leipzig T4225 (*Para.* 40.35; BAD 350226*) and Hamburg 1960.1 (*Para.* 40.35; BAD 350268*).

³ There is only one instance to my knowledge which shows Apollo holding his kithara in a scene of Herakles' capture of the tripod. In this depiction the god is represented to the right of the action, rather than actively involved as he is in other examples; indeed it appears almost as if the hero Herakles is returning the tripod to the god: neck-amphora attributed to a painter akin to the Painter of Vatican 365: Louvre F58 (*ABV* 312.1; BAD 301610*).

⁴ Maas and Snyder (1989) 33 note that in the third quarter of the sixth century there is a marked increase of kithara scenes.

⁵ For a typical example of a wedding scene see a Type B amphora attributed to the Long Nose Painter: London, Sotheby's (*ABV* 328.11; BAD 301757*); a depiction of Athena's birth is found on a Type B amphora attributed to Group E: Berlin F1699 (now lost: *ABV* 136.53; BAD 310313*); and Herakles' apotheosis is shown on a neck-amphora attributed to the Lysippides Painter: London 1851.8-6.15 (*ABV* 256.14, 670; BAD 302224*).

by two women, a scene known as the Delian Triad. Before c.540, even in a composition similar to that of the Delian Triad, the painter may still have represented Apollo as an archer, as is shown on an amphora from c.560. This amphora is unfortunately now lost, but the picture showed Apollo holding his bow and standing between Leto and Artemis, the former performing the veil-gesture and the latter accompanied by a lion.⁶ After c.540, however, in scenes of Apollo standing between two women, the god's attribute is always his kithara not his bow.

What is clear, therefore, is that there was a shift in the way the god Apollo was imagined and consequently depicted. Vase-painters in the first half of the sixth century seem to have preferred to situate Apollo in a violent mythological narrative context, such as the slaughter of the Niobids or the rape of Leto, and therefore his bow was a favourite attribute. After the middle of the sixth century, Apollo appears 80% of the time playing his kithara (or occasionally the lyre) and in a significant number of scenes he is placed in a quiet, family context, apparently quite removed from the mythological battles he has previously engaged in. Vitally, his association with his mother Leto is emphasised. One explanation for this shift in the representation of the god may lie in the growing popularity in Athens, after c.540, of the Delia,⁷ the choral festival held on the island of Delos. This event was a celebration in honour of Apollo, with a focus on his influence over music and poetry, and this emphasis seems to have encouraged Athenian vase-painters to represent Apollo in scenes perhaps intended to evoke the Delia.

Festivals celebrated in archaic Greece tended to include, in some form, a re-enactment, or at the very least an evocation, of a myth which captured the essence of the honoured deity. Usually this myth was related to the origins of the festival. Black-figure vase-painters, in producing images of their gods, sometimes used festival re-enactments as a method of representation, both of the deity and the time at which he or she was honoured. In painting these re-enactments, the vase-painters commonly chose to depict these festivals through illustrating the original myth itself. The use of festival events in order to depict a deity in art is a plausible approach since festivals created the chance to 'encounter' the god through re-enactment, prayers, responses to the sacrifices and the stories about the god retold in poetry.⁸ This suggests that an Athenian would have acquired and developed a conceptualisation of the god (or some aspect of the god) through the songs sung, the processions held and the sacrifices performed at the festival.

The idea that an Athenian would have been able to look at a depiction of a myth relating to a festival and simultaneously see both the mythological origins as well as the re-enactment showcased at the festival has been established in the representations of the ship-cart probably brought out for the Anthesteria in honour of Dionysos.⁹ We have a few illustrations of a ship in which Dionysos sits, although the boat is shown with wheels and has a cloth draped over the stern possibly to conceal the method of propulsion along the road, a rare example of what an Athenian may well have actually

⁶ Whereabouts unknown (BAD 9804; *LIMC* Artemis 1116*).

⁷ It is also known as the Apollonia; Arnold discusses the issues surrounding the name of the festival (1933) 453.

⁸ Gerber (1997) 5 notes that festivals poetry could be commissioned or performed as part of a contest.

⁹ There is still debate about the association of the ship cart procession with the Anthesteria. Simon places the ship-cart procession in the Anthesteria (1983) 93-94, with bibliography, and Shapiro concurs (1989) 99, although Hamilton (1992) discusses the lack of evidence surrounding the Anthesteria and suggests caution. Burkert, however, places the parade of the ship-cart in the City Dionysia (1983) 200-1. The Anthesteria seem to be the more likely conclusion: Hedreen (1992) 67-70.

seen during the procession.¹⁰ The tondo of Exekias' splendid cup in Munich, on the other hand, depicts the mythological scene of Dionysos reclining in a boat with a grapevine climbing up the mast, spreading its branches with bunches of grapes above the sail, and dolphins leaping around the ship.¹¹ This last detail is a motif frequently used to signify the sea, and this image can be seen as a rendition of the myth in which Dionysos sailed to Athens bringing the gift of wine with him.¹² To a modern viewer there may appear to be a disparity between these two representations; however, a neck-amphora in Tarquinia creates a link between these two and supports the idea that an Athenian looking at an illustration such as this would have been able to recognise in the depiction both the mythological origins of the festival and the re-enactment.¹³ On the obverse of the neck-amphora the god, surrounded by satyrs as well as a maenad playing the pipes, rides in a boat clearly shown to be sailing over rolling waves.¹⁴ There is, however, a large chequered cloth draped over the back of the boat, similar to that seen on the back of the ship-cart with wheels, and as this ship is definitely depicted as on the sea and not the road, the cloth seems unnecessary.¹⁵

It appears, then, that in some cases an image of a myth relevant to a festival may have also encouraged the recollection of the festival proceedings. The scenes of the Delian Triad may be seen as an example of this, as they appear to evoke the important elements of the Delia: Apollo's link to the island, his love of music, the closeness of the members of the Triad, and the songs and involvement of women. These significant features of the Delia can be seen in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, which gives us the most descriptive account of the events and atmosphere of the Delia, 'But it is in Delos, Phoibos, that your heart most delights,¹⁶ where the Ionians with trailing robes assemble with their children and wives on your avenue, and when they have seated the gathering they think of you and entertain you with boxing, dancing, and singing. A man might think they were the unaging immortals if he came along then when the Ionians are all together: he would take in the beauty of the whole scene, and be delighted at the spectacle of the men and the fair-girt women, the swift ships and the people's piles of belongings. And besides, *this great wonder, the fame of which will never perish: the Maidens of Delos*, the servants of the Far-shooter, who, *after first hymning Apollo, and then in turn Leto and Artemis profuse of arrows*, turn their thoughts to the men and women of old and *sing a song that charms the peoples*. They know how to mimic all people's voices and their babble; anyone might think it was he himself speaking, so well is their singing constructed.'¹⁷

The *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* is of import not simply for its portrayal of the festival, but also because it is dated to about the same time as the emergence of the Delian Triad in black-figure. The poem is in two parts (although there is debate about

¹⁰ One of the most famous is on a black-figure skyphos attributed to the Theseus Painter, c.500: Athens Ak. 1.1281 (*ABL* 250.29; BAD 465*).

¹¹ Black-figure cup Type A by Exekias: Munich 8729 (*ABV* 146.21, 686; BAD 310403*).

¹² Gantz (1993) 117 outlines the evidence for Dionysos' bringing of the vine to Athens from Naxos and Hedreen (1992) 67-70 discusses Dionysos' journey by sea from Naxos.

¹³ Mackay (2003) 253-55 discusses in detail the instances of the ship-cart and concludes the scenes depicting Dionysos in a boat in the sea 'should not be viewed as entirely separated from the depictions of the festival procession, but are rather to be seen as mythologised versions of the ritual event' (255).

¹⁴ The reverse shows a similar scene, although the god holds a kantharos and there are no musical instruments shown: Tarquinia 678 (BAD 64*); Hedreen (1992) pl.23.

¹⁵ Mackay (2010) 233. Mackay (2003) 255.

¹⁶ My italics for emphasis.

¹⁷ 146-14, trans. West (2003) 82-83.

this);¹⁸ the earliest in date is the section of the poem describing Apollo's creation of his prophetic centre at Delphi, which has been dated to just after the First Sacred War in c.590. The section relating Apollo's birth and festival on Delos was written, possibly by Cynaethus, about half a century later, about 550-540. The two parts were apparently spliced together for a special celebration of the god in 523, although the Delian parts remained a poem in their own right at least until the time of Thucydides.¹⁹ The poem (perhaps the whole work, or perhaps just the Delian segment) was engraved on the Delian temple of Artemis.²⁰

The scenes of the Delian Triad, which emerge after c.540,²¹ appear to be constructed around the same aspects of the Delia as are emphasised in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*. The link between these depictions and the island of Delos is established by placing the god near a palm tree.²² In black-figure vase-painting, palm trees seem to be particularly associated with two places in the ancient Greek mind: Troy²³ and Delos. The association of the palm tree with Delos stems at least in part from the birth of Apollo on the island. The description of Apollo's birth in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* is illuminating, 'Once the goddess of birth labor, Eileithyia, was on Delos, Leto was seized with birthing and strove to be delivered. She clasped her arms around the palm tree, and braced her knees against the soft meadow grass, and the earth beneath her smiled; out he sprang into the light ...'²⁴ Thus, in examples such as the one on a neck-amphora in Munich from c.540,²⁵ Apollo's playing of the kithara near a palm tree suggests the setting is Delos.

The use of his mother and sister as framing figures and listeners emphasises the performance aspect of the music, since by depicting the god with an audience attention is drawn to him as a musician. It is clear that the women are intended as Artemis and Leto as we have at least three examples of their names inscribed, all dating from about 530-500. A neck-amphora attributed to the Pasikles Painter shows Apollo playing for Artemis and Leto on the obverse,²⁶ while an oinochoe fragment in

¹⁸ West gives an overview of the dating of each of the poems, and discusses with references some of the controversy of the dating of this piece (2003) 9-12.

¹⁹ West (2003) 12.

²⁰ West (2003) 11.

²¹ One of the earliest examples is on a neck-amphora in Orvieto: Duomo 333 (BAD 43331; Shapiro [1989] pl.27c). There are two other neck-amphorae of similar date: Princeton Painter, London 1843.11-3.100 (ABV 297.1; BAD 320400*); Group of London B174, Berlin F1717 (ABV 141.7, 686; BAD 310367*). Exekias also painted this scene at an early stage of his career on a neck-amphora represented by fragments, Narbonne 04.1.1.1-8 (ABV 144.2; BAD 310384; Mackay [2010] pl.9).

²² See for instance a neck-amphora in the manner of the Nikoxenos Painter: Hannover 753 (BAD 3254*).

²³ So Mackay (2010) 248. There are several examples that support this: Exekias' amphora depicting the suicide of Ajax: Boulogne 558 (ABV 145.18; BAD 310400*). Scenes of Ajax and Achilles playing dice sometimes include a palm tree as on a neck-amphora attributed to the Group of Würzburg 199: Rome, Villa Giulia 50622 (ABV 288.14; BAD 320317); see also the calyx krater attributed to the Rycroft Painter: Toledo 1963.26 (*Para.* 149.23bis; BAD 351102*). Ilioupersis scenes likewise: see, for instance, a lekythos attributed to the Class of Athens 581: Athens 1046 (ABV 492.74; BAD 303589); and also scenes of Achilles lying in wait for Troilos as on a neck-amphora, Göttingen J12 (BAD 6901; LIMC Achilleus 219*). In vases of the middle period, the theory that the palm tree is quite a deliberate marker for either Troy or Delos is well attested. Later vases seem to use the palm tree in a more slapdash manner, however.

²⁴ 115-19, trans. West (2003) 78-81; see also 14-18. In addition see Callim. *Hymn* 2.4-5 and 4.209-11; Plut. *Thes.* 21.

²⁵ Munich 1473 (BAD 743*).

²⁶ Würzburg L220, c. 530-520 (ABV 328.1, 672; BAD 301758*).

Athens shows Apollo playing for Artemis (named) and Leto.²⁷ A hydria fragment from the end of the sixth century shows the god seated on a stool framed by Artemis and Leto (all named) at an altar.²⁸ Anne Queyrel has argued that in some instances the women should be taken as Muses rather than as the mother and sister of Apollo, but after looking at all the examples of Apollo playing the kithara available in the BAD, it is almost certain that the women were intended as Artemis and Leto.²⁹ The named versions make it very unlikely that other similar scenes should be, or would have been, taken as representing some other grouping or occasion, and this particular schema is the most popular way of representing the kithara-playing god together with his mother and sister. This trend of naming the two women as Artemis and Leto continues into classical red-figure as well,³⁰ an indication that the identification of these goddesses as Artemis and Leto is by then an established and popular tradition. So when Apollo is shown in black-figure in his Delian persona it seems likely that it is his relationship with his mother and sister that is of significance.

In fact, when Apollo is shown in scenes playing for an audience,³¹ his mother and/or sister are recognisable in the audience in 57% of the instances. Furthermore, it is particularly his mother who is associated with Delos and his playing of the kithara, and this too is represented in the images. When a comparison is made between the scenes of Apollo in his musical aspect and Apollo in his archer aspect, Leto becomes associated almost exclusively with the former. Apart from scenes depicting Tityos abducting Leto, there are only a few examples which show Leto alongside Apollo when he holds his bow and arrows.³²

²⁷ Oinochoe fragment near the Madrid Painter: Athens, Akr. Coll. 1.825 (*ABV* 330.1; *BAD* 301775*). Note the *BAD* entry states that it is Leto who is named, but the four letters on the fragment are *.JPTM/.* (retrograde, vertical).

²⁸ Malibu 84.AE.119 (*BAD* 30531*).

²⁹ In the entry for Mousa/Mousai (*LIMC* VI p. 673), Queyrel points out that it can be very difficult to determine which women are intended as Muses since the only criterion for looking at the Muses in the sixth century is their relationship with Apollo. When the two goddesses are shown holding flowers and branches, without any other attributes, Queyrel saw them as Muses (*LIMC* VI p. 674). However, one cannot ignore the examples that show flowers in the hands of both Artemis and Leto in scenes where their identity is not in doubt. For instance a neck-amphora in Orvieto shows Artemis with a bow and Leto with a flower: Orvieto 1006 (*BAD* 46552); and a neck-amphora near Group E shows Artemis holding a flower and also the foreleg of a deer as it rears up towards her: Louvre F218 (*ABV* 139.9, 665; *BAD* 310341*). Examples in the *BAD* do not seem to support the theory that branches or twigs indicate any specific occurrence or person (although some gods do hold branches, it is not exclusive). In the sixth century they seem to denote victory or a ritual occasion, such as success at the games or a sacrifice. Ultimately, as long as the essentials of the scene-type are not changed, slight variations in the gestures of the two women do not, to my mind, necessarily warrant a change in their identity.

³⁰ The figures are named, for instance on two vases attributed to the Villa Giulia Painter: red-figure bell-krater, New York 24.97.96 (*ARV*² 619.17; *BAD* 207169*); red-figure pelike, Basel LU49 (*Para.* 399.48 *bis*; *BAD* 275769).

³¹ In working out these statistics, all scenes of Apollo playing in seemingly non-mythological settings were included (therefore representations of weddings, the Birth of Athena, and Herakles' apotheosis were excluded).

³² See the lost amphora from c.560 mentioned in n.7 above (*BAD* 9804; *LIMC* Artemis 1116*); see also two late lekythoi attributed to the Beldam Class, both showing Apollo in his mother's arms shooting the Python: Cab. Méd. 306 (*ABV* 572.7; *BAD* 330984*); and Bergen VK62.115 (*Para.* 294; *BAD* 352169*). There is one other depiction of Apollo with his mother and holding his bow and arrows. The god, with his kithara and his bow, is seated in a tripod travelling across the sea; Artemis and Leto frame the scene: neck-amphora attributed to the Ready Painter, Louvre CP10619 (*ABV* 685.8; *BAD* 306550*).

When Apollo is depicted in middle and late black-figure playing his kithara, he plays for women in the majority of these scenes.³³ This seems odd since in cult practice his influence is much more obviously over young ephebes.³⁴ His identity seems to be shaped by his association with his mother and sister, and other women such as the Muses. In fact, of all the examples which include Apollo holding a kithara on the BAD,³⁵ he plays for *only* women in 68.3% of the scenes of him playing for an audience,³⁶ he plays for women and men (usually deities) in 23.4% of the scenes,³⁷ and so in only 8.3% of the scenes does he play for men only – usually iconographically identified as gods.³⁸

As well as the scenes which show Artemis and Leto, Apollo is sometimes placed between two pairs of unidentified women.³⁹ This type of depiction of the god playing his kithara for a quiet, close-knit group of women may have reminded the ancient Athenians of the Delian Maidens, a famous feature of the Delia.⁴⁰ The black-figure depictions identified as examples of choruses are for the most part quite clearly representing dramatic performances, recognised through the uniformity of costume and gesture, and the presence of a piper.⁴¹ There are, however, some examples of a chorus performing to the kithara; one such instance depicts a chorus of satyrs, accompanied by one of their number playing the kithara, approaching an altar.⁴² The scenes of Apollo framed by pairs of women are markedly different from other

³³ According to Stansbury-O'Donnell (2006) 224, women are only rarely placed as spectators at musical scenes. Consequently the large number of scenes of a kitharist framed by two or more women must be explained another way. As a result the female gender of the audience may be taken as one of the major markers for the god Apollo as opposed to a mortal player.

³⁴ As Rutherford explains in his analysis of the paean, 'There is a resemblance between the singers and the deity invoked, who is generally a young male, a model for both *epheboi* and *paides*' (1994-5) 114.

³⁵ The same data was used as outlined above in n.32. The raw data is as follows: total number of scenes included: 312; number of scenes showing only women: 213; scenes of female and male listeners: 73; scenes which show only male listeners: 26. When taken together, in 91.7% of scenes in which Apollo plays for an audience, women are present, if not the only ones depicted.

³⁶ This includes scenes with more than two women, such as the three women standing around Apollo on an olpe with an inscription praising Euphiletos: New York 06.1021.47 (*ABV* 667; BAD 306435; *LIMC* Mousa, Mousai 31b*); or as on a skyphos attributed to the Theseus Painter: St. Petersburg 4498 (*Para.* 257; BAD 351547; *LIMC* Apollon 702*).

³⁷ These scenes frequently include Poseidon, as on an amphora attributed to the circle of the Lysippides Painter, c.530, Boston MFA 68.46 (BAD 753*); or Hermes and Poseidon as on a neck-amphora attributed to the Medea Group, London B262 (*ABV* 321.3; BAD 301684*).

³⁸ For instance Apollo plays for Dionysos (ivy wreath, kantharos) and Hermes (hat, kerykeion) on a neck-amphora attributed to the Priam Painter, London 1867.5-8.952 (*ABV* 331.14; BAD 301792*); and on an unattributed neck-amphora in the McCoy private collection in Texas, once Castle Ashby 7 (BAD 29*).

³⁹ As, for example, on a neck-amphora attributed to the Leagros Group, Agrigento R138 (BAD 15752*). See also an unattributed neck-amphora in Los Angeles County Museum A5933.50.10 (BAD 4644*).

⁴⁰ *Hom. Hymn Ap.* 156-57. Apollo's link to choruses is attested to in Pherecydes where a story is presented in which Apollo and Philonis produce a son, Philammon, who was the first person to teach choruses of young women; fr.63 in Müller (1975) vol. 1, 87. Ovid also tells the tale: *Met.* 11.301-27. For more information on Philammon see Gantz (1993) 93-4. Webster provides a substantial list of choruses depicted on vases (1970) 11-23, 35-40.

⁴¹ For example a mastoid in Rome shows a group of youths, some wearing masks (?) on their heads, dancing to the accompaniment of a piper: Rome, Museo Artistico (BAD 11358; Bieber [1961] fig.182).

⁴² Skyphos fragments attributed to the Theseus Painter, Budapest 54.230 (BAD 14998). On a neck-amphora attributed to the Group of Compiègne 988 three satyrs playing kitharai process to the right; the leader steps high and all three are shown with open mouths suggesting they are singing: Berlin 1966.1 (*ABV* 285.1; BAD 320278*).

representations of choruses, but the context of the performance is also clearly different, and it is significant that the members of the chorus are female, not male. Rutherford remarks that in the classical period there could well have been a tension between the male chorus the Athenians sent to Delos and the Delian focus on their own chorus of women.⁴³ The *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* makes it clear that the Delian Maidens were renowned in the mid-sixth century, which encourages the suggestion that these scenes may be depicting this famous chorus. The composition, in its similarity to scenes of Apollo with Leto and Artemis, may have enabled a viewer of the vase to draw a connection between the two, perhaps even reminding an observer of the Delian emphasis on women when seeing Apollo framed by his mother and sister. The association of Apollo with women, then, may have evoked both his family connections and his link to the chorus, particularly the chorus of maidens for which the Delia was famous. The black-figure scenes of the Delian Triad appear to emphasise four elements: a Delian setting, performance music, Apollo's familial connections, and his association with women.

One reason for the change in the representation of the god Apollo after c.540 may lie in the historical events just after the middle of the sixth century. Thucydides writes that the tyrant Peisistratos purified the island of Delos at about that time,⁴⁴ and instituted some of the ritual elements of the worship of Apollo at Athens.⁴⁵ In this instance we have both literary and archaeological evidence on the nearby island Rheneia for the purification of Delos to support Thucydides' assertion, as Long writes.⁴⁶ Shapiro points out that Peisistratos' motive for involvement on Delos was to strengthen relations with the Delians in order to assert Athens' superiority as the oldest Ionian city.⁴⁷ It is therefore possible to argue that the tyrant's actions on Delos stimulated an increase in the number of scenes depicting Apollo in a Delian setting as the Delia became a major feature of the Athenian calendar. The actions of Peisistratos may have enabled the Athenians to envisage the god in a different way and in another context.

There are several mentions of the Delia in literature, confirming that the festivities were well known in Athens, which supports the theory that the Delia were popular with the Athenians.⁴⁸ The Delia were the most important festival for the Delians, probably held in the month of Hieros,⁴⁹ and their splendour and prestige drew competitors from far and wide. Pausanias writes that the Messenians sent a chorus of men and a sacrifice to Delos in the time of Phintias, approximately 740-720.⁵⁰ By Socrates' time, the Delian embassy was of no small consequence. Plato tells us in the

⁴³ Rutherford (2004) 86.

⁴⁴ Thuc. 3.104. See also Hdt. 1.64

⁴⁵ Wilson (2007) 176 and n.98; Shapiro (1989) 48-49.

⁴⁶ Long (1958) 297.

⁴⁷ Shapiro (1989) 48-49; Boardman (1978) 234. Rutherford (2004) 89 argues that *theōriai* were a great opportunity to reinforce a city's identity. See also Wilson (2007) 180, 182.

⁴⁸ Wilson (2007) 175 notes that at least by the classical period the Delia were 'the great festival for Apollo "abroad"' and Rutherford (1994) 67 cites inscriptional evidence proving that at least by the 420s six *arkhithēōroi* helped to fund the embassy to Delos. While this evidence is from the Classical period, Rutherford (1994) 82 affirms that the Athenian delegation to Delos is an ancient tradition. The connection between Pythian Apollo worshipped in Athens and Delian Apollo has been discussed by Wilson (2007) 175-82, with bibliography.

⁴⁹ Rutherford (2004) 83 discusses the dating of the Delian festivals and the corresponding Athenian delegation. He concludes that it is impossible for us to know for certain when they were held, although there are several possibilities, including a festival focused on the birth of Apollo.

⁵⁰ Paus. 4.4.1.

Phaedo that Socrates' execution was delayed until the ship arrived safely home.⁵¹ Callimachus in his *Hymn to Delos* describes the cities from all corners of the world sending their choirs to the contests at Delos.⁵² According to Plutarch, the Delia in the time of Nikias involved a splendid choir singing as they marched, followed by the sacrifice, choral contests and banquets.⁵³

In further assessing the construction of the identity of Apollo, the epithets of the god in the archaic and classical period were also taken into account. In analysing these epithets the particular context of these traditional nominal epithet phrases was of secondary importance to the establishment of the way in which the identity of a god was constructed within a traditional context. The first of these epithet associations is Apollo's link with the island of Delos. Several times Apollo is described as 'Delian' or 'born of Delos',⁵⁴ thereby confirming his association with the island.

Another feature presented in the vase-painting is Apollo's association with his mother and sister, and this too is stressed in literature as well as cult practice. The Triad was known before the period in which it becomes popular in Athenian art, as a group of three bronze statuettes representing Apollo, Artemis and Leto from c.700 shows.⁵⁵ Apollo is also repeatedly referred to as the son of Leto in his epithets. This is quite surprising since the usual way of identifying oneself in ancient Athens was through one's father and deme.⁵⁶ Of the 67 times Apollo's parents are associated with him in epithets,⁵⁷ over half are describing his relationship to Leto with no mention of Zeus at all.⁵⁸ Another ten percent mention both parents,⁵⁹ such as in Sappho fr.99 or Hesiod's *Shield* 202. Bacchylides describes Apollo as Delos-born son of deep-girded Leto, a combination that emphasises the relationship between Apollo, Leto, and the island of Delos.⁶⁰ Apollo's connection to his twin sister Artemis is also mentioned in epithets⁶¹ and stems from a Mycenaean religious belief, according to Simon.⁶²

The focus on performance music that is found in the black-figure Delian Triad scenes is also evident in the literature describing the festival; it is clear the festivals were known for their choruses and dances as we hear in the *Homeric Hymn*. Xenophon states that the choral groups competing at Delos from Athens were seen as the best,⁶³ and Callimachus praises the choruses of the men and the dancing of the

⁵¹ *Phd.* 58a-c. See also Callim. 4.307-315.

⁵² 4.275-282.

⁵³ Plutarch describes Nikias' conducting of the choruses from Athens (*Nic.* III.4-6). See also Arnold (1933) 453-54.

⁵⁴ For a selection of references other than those in the Homeric Hymn, see Pind. *Pae.* 5.37; Bacchyl. *Victory Ode* 3.58; Soph. *OT* 154. Pindar's fifth paean may have been performed by a chorus at the Delia, which would account for the use of this epithet for Apollo: Wilson (2007) 178; Rutherford (2004) 83-85.

⁵⁵ Found on Dreros, Crete, in a temple for Apollo, they are now in the Heraklion Museum, known as the Dreros Triad (*LIMC* Apollon 658*).

⁵⁶ See for instance Hom. *Il.* 10.68-69. Dickey (1997) 8 observes that the use of patronymics remained more popular in poetry than in prose, although the practice as a whole declines after the fifth century.

⁵⁷ These examples were from works earlier than c.430, and were accessed from the *TLG* using the various forms of 'Apollo' as the search term.

⁵⁸ See for example Pind. *Pyth.* 9.5-6; Hes. *Sc.* 478-79.

⁵⁹ The total number of epithets collected numbered 507; 67 referred to his parentage; 34 to Leto, 26 to Zeus and 7 to both.

⁶⁰ Bacchyl. *Victory Ode* 11.16-17.

⁶¹ For instance Pindar describes them as children of Leto: *Pae.* 5.44; see also Bacchyl. *Fr.* 20D.5-6 in Maehler (2004) 76.

⁶² Simon (1983) 75. She follows Nilsson (1950) who sees in the birth of the twins on Delos an extension of the Mycenaean concept of the divine child.

⁶³ Xen. *Mem.* 3.3.12.

girls.⁶⁴ Arnold has researched the festivals held on Delos using literary and inscriptional evidence, and she concludes that, on the whole ‘the program [of the festivals] is still essentially a choral performance.’⁶⁵ It seems clear that the music is the most important element of this festival in both the spectacles and the competitions. Winners of these choral contests were awarded tripods, as is recorded on some later inscriptions.⁶⁶ This may well have been the practice as early as the sixth century; on a Type B amphora from c.540 attributed to the Swing Painter a large palm tree decorated with what appear to be strips of coloured cloth stands between two tripods. Two draped men frame the image.⁶⁷ This vase-painting is perhaps a rendition of the triumphant chorus leaders with their prizes, as the palm tree and the garments of the men seem to suggest the setting be taken as Delos.⁶⁸

Black-figure vase-painters only rarely paint scenes of the actual happenings at a festival; rather they chose to represent a mythological episode or story that both explains the origins of the festival and evokes the yearly event at the same time.⁶⁹ The Delia seem to have been concentrated on several important elements that arise from the story of the birth of Apollo – his family connections, his association with the island through his mother Leto and his love of music, song and dance. The vase-painters then pick up on these important aspects, and evoke this particular myth in order to depict the Delia in the scene-type of the Triad. The god is central in the scene, the festival is, after all, in his honour, and he is shown holding the musical instrument he is best known for. He is performing, as the competitors at the festival would do, but in this case for his mother and sister. Their presence calls to mind the reason for Apollo’s festival on Delos – Leto’s giving birth to him there. The composition of the god framed by women, either pairs or single figures, may have brought to mind the celebrated Delian Maidens.

In effect, the vase-painters (who were Athenian) picked out the essential elements of the festival, the aspects they would have been familiar with as reinforced by myth or the results of a recent contest at the Delia – the music, the honouring of Apollo and the special sacred place Leto held on Delos. They chose to represent a mythological event in order to evoke the festival which celebrates the same aspects of the god. In short, we can see at the same time the essence of the festival *and* the story behind it, that of Apollo’s birth. They work together to create an image of the god and an evocation of the festival.

REFERENCES

Abbreviations

ABV – Beazley (1956).

Add.² – Carpenter, Mannack, and Medonça (1989).

ARV² – Beazley (1963).

BAD – Beazley Archive Database: <https://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/> (accessed March 2011).

⁶⁴ Callim. 4.300-6. Rutherford (1994) 72 sees the singing of the Delian Maidens as a part of the celebration at the arrival of the Athenian delegation.

⁶⁵ Arnold (1933) 452.

⁶⁶ Wilson (2007) 175-176; Rutherford (2004) 86; Arnold (1933) 455.

⁶⁷ Munich 1395 (*ABV* 305.24; *BAD* 301504*).

⁶⁸ Shapiro (1989) 60 argues that this scene shows the Pythion, however no building is shown and the palm tree is most closely connected with the island Delos at this time.

⁶⁹ See Mackay (2003) 265-66.

LIMC – Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae.

Para. – Beazley (1971).

TLG – Thesaurus Linguae Graecae, online at <http://www.tlg.uci.edu/> (accessed March 2011).

Arnold, I.R. (1933). ‘Local Festivals at Delos’, *AJArch* 37: 452-58.

Beazley, J.D. (1956). *Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

— (1963). *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*. (2 edn.) Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

— (1971). *Paralipomena*. London: Oxford Univ. Press.

Bieber, M. (1961). *The History of the Greek and Roman Theatre*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press.

Boardman, J. (1978). ‘Herakles, Delphi and Kleisthenes of Sikyon’, *Rev. Arch.* 227-34.

Carpenter, T.H., T. Mannack, and M. Mendonça (1989). *Beazley Addenda* (2 edn.). Oxford and New York: Oxford Univ. Press.

Dickey, E. (1997). ‘The ancient Greek address system and some proposed sociolinguistic universals’, *Language in Society* 26: 1-13.

Gantz, T. (1993). *Early Greek Myth*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press.

Gerber, D.E. (ed.) (1999). *Greek Iambic Poetry from the 7th to the 5th Centuries BC*. Cambridge (Mass.) and London: Harvard Univ. Press.

Hamilton, R. (1992). *Choes and Anthesteria*. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press.

Hedreen, G. (1992). *Silens in Attic Black-figure Vase-painting*. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press.

Long, C. (1958). ‘Greeks, Carians, and the Purification of Delos’, *AJArch* 62: 297-306.

Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae. (1981-99). Zürich: Artemis.

Mackay, E.A. (2003). ‘Feasts of Images’ in A. F. Basson and W. J. Dominik (eds.), *Literature, Art, History: Studies on Classical Antiquity and Tradition in Honour of W.J. Henderson*. Hamburg: Peter Lang. 249-66.

— (2010). *Tradition and Originality. A Study of Exekias*. Oxford: Archaeopress.

Maehler, H. (ed.) (2004). *Bacchylides: A Selection*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press.

Mass, M., and J.M. Snyder (1989). *Stringed Instruments of Ancient Greece*. New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press.

Müller, C. (1975). *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*. Vol. 1. Frankfurt: Minerva.

Nilsson, M.P. (1950). *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and its Survival in Greek Religion*. Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup.

Rutherford, I. (1994-5). ‘Apollo in Ivy: The Tragic Paean’, *Arion* 3: 112-35.

— (2004). ‘χορὸς εἶς ἐκ τῆσδε τῆς πόλεως ... (Xen. Mem. 3.3.12): Song-Dance and State-Pilgrimage at Athens’, in P. Murray and P. Wilson (eds.), *Music and the Muses: the Culture of Mousike in the Classical Athenian City*. Oxford and New York: Oxford Univ. Press. 67-90.

Shapiro, H.A. (1989). *Art and Cult Under the Tyrants in Athens*. Mainz: von Zabern.

Simon, E. (1983). *Festivals of Attica*. Wisconsin: Univ. of Wisconsin Press.

Stansbury-O'Donnell, M.D. (2006). *Vase-Painting, Gender, and Social Identity in Archaic Athens*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press.

Webster, T.B.L. (1970). *The Greek Chorus*. London: Methuen & Co Ltd.

West, M.L. (ed.) (2003). *Homeric Hymns, Homeric Apocrypha, Lives of Homer*. Cambridge (Mass.) and London: Harvard Univ. Press.

Wilson, P. (2007). 'Performance in the *Pythion*: The Athenian Thargelia', in P. Wilson (ed.), *The Greek Theatre and Festivals*. Oxford and New York: Oxford Univ. Press. 150-82.